

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: GW
SUBJECT: 33RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE CAPTURE OF THE
BRIDGE OF REMAGEN

1. THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE, AMONG THEM SEVENTYFIVE U.S. SOLDIERS, GATHERED IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE NEAR THE TOWERS OF THE LUDENDORFF BRIDGE TO COMMEMORATE THE THIRTYTHIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE CAPTURE BY AMERICAN FORCES OF THE LUDENDORFF RAILROAD BRIDGE ACROSS THE RHINE.

2. REMAGEN'S MAYOR, HANS-PETER KUERTEN, MAJOR DONALD ULLMAN OF USDAO, BONN, AND GENERAL MAXIMILIAN VON HITZFELD, THE GERMAN ARMY AREA COMMANDER AT THE TIME THE BRIDGE WAS CAPTURED, GAVE ADDRESSES AND DEDICATED A PLAQUE HONORING THE SOLDIERS OF BOTH SIDES.
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ORIGINAL WARTIME COPIES OF THE STARS AND STRIPES FRONT PAGES WERE DISPLAYED NEXT TO PICTURES DEPICTING THE BRIDGE'S HISTORY. OTHER MEMORABILIA, INCLUDING PICTURES TAKEN WHEN THE FILM "THE BRIDGE AT REMAGEN" (PLAYING AT THE LOCAL MOVIE HOUSE) WAS MADE, WERE DISPLAYED NEAR DRAWINGS AND MODELS OF THE BRIDGE MADE BY REMAGEN SCHOOLCHILDREN.

3. THE SUNNY RHINELAND WEATHER AND THE GOOD LOCAL WINE CONTRIBUTED TO THE HOSPITABLE, FRIENDLY AND PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE. EMBASSY LABOFF, LABATT, AND U.S. PRESS REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED AND WERE MOBBED BY SCHOOLCHILDREN SEEKING AUTOGRAPHS, ALTHOUGH THE MOST PRIZED AUTOGRAPHS WERE FROM UNIFORMED U.S. SOLDIERS. GERMAN MEDIA WERE WELL REPRESENTED AND MANY OF TODAY'S PAPERS CARRIED FEATURE STORIES ON THE ANNIVERSARY.

4. ONE OF THE HIGH POINTS OF THE DAY WAS THE FIRST PUBLIC SALE OF STONE PIECES OF THE BRIDGE. THE STONES ARE IN PAPERWEIGHT SIZE LUCITE AND MARBLE SQUARES, AND COME WITH A NUMBERED CERTIFICATE SIGNED BY MAYOR KUERTEN. FYI: THE PAPERWEIGHTS ARE DM 40.--(ABOUT \$ 20.00) AND CAN BE ORDERED FROM

STADTVERWALTUNG
RATHAUS
POSTFACH 1640
5480 REMAGEN, GERMANY.

THE FUNDS WILL BE USED TO BUILD A MUSEUM.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: THE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WAS ONE OF THE BEST EXAMPLES OF THE CLOSENESS OF US-FRG
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RELATIONS ON A PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE LEVEL THAT THE EMBASSY HAS SEEN. MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS ON BOTH SIDES WERE NACHKRIEGSKINDER (CHILDREN BORN AFTER THE WAR), BUT THE LEVEL OF INTEREST IN THE HISTORY OF THE BRIDGE AND US-FRG RELATIONS WAS VERY HIGH. AN AMERICAN ACCENT WAS WORTH A CONVERSATION, A GLASS OF WINE, AND A VERY PLEASANT AFTERNOON ON THE PEACEFUL BANKS OF THE RHINE IN REMAGEN ON MARCH 7TH.
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